

Draft General Plan Amendments for Urban Agriculture

Conservation Element

A. Climate Change & Sustainable Development

Page CE-6 Edits

Add “Local Food” as an issue area related to climate change in Table CE-1, and reference new policies related to urban agriculture.

Page CE-12 Edits

E-A.14 Support expansion of urban agriculture to realize environmental, economic, and public health benefits including: increasing access to fresh local food; reducing energy used for food transportation and distribution; and increasing opportunities for economic development and local enterprise (see also Conservation Element, Section L, and Recreation Element, Sections A and E).

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L. Agricultural Resources

Goals

- ◆ Retention of productive agricultural lands.
- ◆ Greater use of sustainable agriculture practices.
- ◆ Reduction in land use conflicts between agriculture and other land uses.
- ◆ Retention of the rural agricultural character of river valleys.
- ◆ Expansion of urban agriculture uses

Discussion

Agriculture has been an important factor in the history and local economy of San Diego. San Diego's unique location and combination of climate, soil types, and international border location have created an agricultural industry which produces off-season and specialty crops, including avocados, citrus, tomatoes, flowers and nursery stock.

Soils in San Diego vary appreciably in origin, degree of weathering, depth and texture. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) has classified lands

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according to their productive capability, taking into account specific qualities of the soil slope of the land, degree of wetness, flooding hazards and other factors. There are still many locations in San Diego which have the productive soil and the other requisites to be especially well suited for agricultural purposes. In San Diego, the best remaining agricultural soils are found in broad river valleys. The City has developed programs to keep these valleys predominately agricultural through lease agreements, such as in San Pasqual Valley where agriculture comprises approximately 30 percent of the land use.

There is also increased public interest in urban agriculture, which is the production of food in and around cities for local consumption. Urban agriculture, including community farms and gardens, offers potential to: further sustainability goals; improve public health and equity through better access to fresh healthy food; promote food system security by reducing reliance on long-distance supply chains; reduce the amount of energy used to transport food; and to foster economic development opportunities, including micro-enterprise. A core principle of sustainability involves meeting basic human needs, such as food, shelter, and water, via renewable sources as close to their consumption as possible. Although the City has limited options for additional large-scale agriculture because of its urbanized nature, it can help support the availability of sustainable local food choices by providing opportunities for urban agriculture, community farms and gardens, and public spaces suitable for local farmers' markets (see also Recreation Element, Policies RE-E.8 and RE-A.6.b, and Urban Design Element, Policy UD-E.1). ~~Farmer's markets provide access to local, and potentially healthier, food choices.~~

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Policies

- CE-L.1. Manage agricultural activity to minimize soil erosion and minimize the release of contaminants into surface and groundwater resources.
- CE-L.2. Limit retail activity in agriculturally-designated areas to uses that are reasonably related to agriculture (e.g., sale of locally grown farm products).
- CE-L.3. Encourage agricultural operations such as community farms and gardens (especially on City-leased lands) to provide for educational experiences which demonstrate the history, importance and value of agricultural operations, and to provide more healthy, sustainable, local food options.
- CE-L.4. Continue water reclamation research programs to develop realistic methods of providing inexpensive means of leaching soils, irrigating crops and preventing salt water intrusion.
- CE-L.5. Integrate agriculture and sustainability principles that promote clean air and water, and healthy soils, habitats, and ecosystems.
 - a. Encourage sustainable agricultural and water quality best management practices, such as tillage, use of grass filter strips, runoff detention basins, and organic farming, on all private land and require BMPs on new or renewed City land leased for agricultural purposes. Provide the minimum amount of flood control/channelization.

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- b. Encourage sustainable agricultural operations, especially on City-leased lands, to offer more sustainable, local food choices.
- CE-L.6. Provide mechanisms to permit private land owners of prime agricultural lands to take advantage of the Williamson Act.
- CE-L.7. Balance the economic benefits provided by agricultural uses with the competing water resource, biological and cultural resource management and recreation priorities.
- CE-L.8 Foster an urban agriculture system that is environmentally and economically sustainable.
 - a. Encourage the use of urban agricultural techniques that require reduced land and water use as compared to conventional methods.
 - b. Recognize the cultural and economic benefits of providing opportunities for residents to grow healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate foods, and to augment their food budget through urban agriculture.
 - c. Reduce waste and increase agricultural productivity through increased composting of organic waste.
 - d. Recognize the essential role of honeybees and other pollinators in healthy ecosystems and in the food supply chain. Support safe and responsible beekeeping.
- CE-L.9 Increase opportunities for urban agriculture.
 - a. Develop land development regulations that allow urban agriculture uses in appropriate locations, with parameters designed to control potential impacts to neighboring uses and properties.
 - b. Develop land development regulations that increase opportunities for farmers markets on public and private lands
 - c. Monitor implementation of urban agriculture goals and policies.
 - d. Support rooftop gardens and the use of edible landscape materials.
 - e. Encourage the use of vacant and underutilized lots for urban agriculture.
 - f. Explore potential locations for urban agricultural uses as a part of long range plans and other projects.
- CE-L.10 Support food system planning that increases food system security, links local producers to local markets, creates jobs, and re-circulates food dollars in the local economy.
 - a. Participate in policy-making, and public education and outreach efforts related to food system planning.
 - b. Support efforts to establish food distribution centers within the region and encourage the development of a permanent Public Market in the City of San Diego.
 - c. Plan for and reserve areas needed for local food processing, wholesaling, and distribution through the use of zoning and economic development incentives.
- CE-L.11 Collaborate with public health professionals and others to maximize the public health benefits related to urban agriculture, and seek their participation in the community plan update process.